



R.A.C.C.E.

Challenging systems of oppression by advocating for culturally competent educational practices.

RADICAL ADVOCATES FOR CROSS-CULTURAL EDUCATION

Testimony Submitted to the Education Committee

by Robert M. Goodrich

Co-Founder of Radical Advocates for Cross-Cultural Education-RACCE,

In Support of S.B. 455 An Act Concerning Minority Teacher Recruitment and Retention

March 14, 2018

Good afternoon Representative Fleischmann, Senator Slossberg, Senator Boucher, and the esteemed members of the Education Committee.

My name is Robert M. Goodrich and I am the Co-Founder of RACCE. RACCE is a grassroots think-tank that researches, raises awareness, and advocates for racial equity in our schools. Today we are here to provide testimony in support of S.B. 455 an act concerning minority teacher recruitment and retention. Dr. Arlene Garcia, one of our other Co-Founders served on the MTRR task force in 2016 and was a member of the Policy Oversight Committee for the SDE on Minority Teacher Recruitment. As an organization and individually, as advocates for racial equity, we believe our legislative leaders must enact legislation that makes the hiring of more Black and Brown teachers much easier for all districts, especially those districts with low numbers of non-white teachers that have majority-minority student populations. Additionally, we firmly support any policy that eliminates barriers that exist for Black and Brown teacher candidates in Connecticut.

S.B. 455 does both. S.B. 455 is not a large or radical piece of legislation that we would prefer but it represents a pragmatic approach to increasing the amount of Black and Brown educators in Connecticut. As you know, Connecticut has a worsening and frightening teacher shortage problem, which, in part, is caused by confusing, unresponsive, and outdated teacher certification regulations. This bill increases the ability of the SDE to certify candidates that are badly needed in ELL and ESL programs across the state; provides opportunity to a broad range of professionals who have exhibited subject mastery in other professions by accepting their qualifications as a means to satisfy requirements for coursework or degrees; and creates a more accessible as well as reasonable pathway to professional certification for out-of-state candidates already teaching. We must make it clear that if we are to have public charter schools then we must allow their educators who are similarly qualified to have access to professional certification in the same ways all other public school teachers have. Currently, some public charter school educators who have been given a permit to teach have limited options to become provisionally or professionally certified in Connecticut. S. B. 455 does not provide a less stringent path to certification for those educators rather it provides a fairer path to a provisional certification than what is currently available.

Opposition to this bill for any reason associated with the public charter school permits provision is a misguided attack on all educators, especially educators of color who may have permits and are teaching at public charter schools currently.

Our understanding of S.B. 455 is simple. It removes barriers to certification and will allow districts who are motivated to recruit, hire and retain more Black and Brown educators to do exactly that. We urge this committee to act quickly so that the SDE and districts can work to implement these badly needed changes and leverage these new tools and bolster their efforts to hire more Black and Brown educators.

Sincerely,

Robert M. Goodrich
Co-Founder, RACCE
(203) 597-7456
rgoodrich@racce.net
RACCE.NET